

Message Text

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46/50

ACTION NEA-12

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FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9511

INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL

AMEMBASSY ROME

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 6619

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y (TEXT)

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS

SUBJ: CALL ON ABBA EBAN: ISRAELI CONCERNS ABOUT ROME

ROME ICAO MEETING

REF: STATE 164782

1. SUMMARY: ABBA EBAN EXPRESSED TO ME SERIOUS CONCERN OF GOI THAT ROME ICAO MEETING MIGHT RESULT IN SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL. EBAN REPEATED SEVERAL TIMES THAT ISRAEL EXPECTED CRITICAL "REHETORIC" AT TOMR DUE FACT DECK STACKED AGAINST HER IN THESE INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES; AT SAME TIME EBAN EMPHASIZED NEED TO WORK CLOSELY WITH US TO AVOID ANY "PRACTICAL" ADVERSE RESULTS FROM ROME THAT WOULD HARM ISRAEL'S ONLY LINK TO THE WORLD - HER CIVIL AVIATION. I NOTED STRONG US SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL IS CONSTANT FACTOR IN OUR RELATIONS, CITING RECENT SC VETO AS CASE IN POINT; I ALSO NOTED THAT ACTION LIKE AUG 10 AIRLINE DIVERSION WAS VERY TROUBLESOME FOR US. AS CONCERNS ROME CONFERENCE, I CONFWRMED PREVIOUS ASSURANCES GIVEN IN WASHINGTON THAT US WOULD WORK CLOSELY WITH GOI IN ROME TO PREVENT RESULTS HARMFUL TO ISRAELI CIVIL
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AVIATION. END SUMMARY.

2. I PAID INITIAL CALL ON FONMIN ABBA EBAN ON
AUG 21. DCM ACCOMPANIED. EPHRIAM EVRON DEPUTY DIRGEN,
MFA, SAT IN WITH EBAN.

3. EBAN INITIATED DISCUSSION BY QUOTING REMARKS BY SECRETARY
ROGERS AT MY SWEARING IN THAT RELATIONS BETWEEN
ISRAEL AND THE US WERE "BETTER THAN EVER." HE NOTED THAT MY
APPOINTMENT WAS OBVIOUS EARNEST ON PART OF
PRESIDENT AND SECRETARY TO ENSURE RELATIONS CONTINUED AT LEAST
AT CURRENT HIGH LEVEL. EBAN WELCOMED ME AS
AN OLD FRIEND AS WELL AS DIPLOMATIC COLLEAGUE AND LOOKED FORWARD
TO WORKING CLOSELY WITH ME.

4. AFTER A FEW MOMENTS OF PERSONAL COMMENTS AND AMENITIES,
EBAN APOLOGIZED FOR "BREAKING PROTOCOL" BY BRINGING UP
BUSINESS DURING A COURTESY CALL, AND LAUNCHED A DISCUSSION OF
THE FORTHCOMING ICAO CONFERENCE IN ROME. EBAN REVIEWED THE
RECORD ON ARAB TERRORISM, PARTICULARLY AS CONCERNS CIVIL
AVIATION AND THE FAILURE OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY TO DEAL
WITH IT - OR EVEN TO EVIDENCE ANY GREAT DESIRE TO DO SO. HE NOTED
HOW UNFAIR IT WAS UNDER THE CIRCUMSTANCES FOR ISRAEL TO BE
SINGLED OUT FOR CNDEMNATION AND CRITICISM FOR ACTIONS - SUCH
AS AUG 10 INCIDENT - WHICH WERE MERELY ISRAELI ATTEMPTS TO
COPE WITH A PROBLEM WHICH WORLD WOULD PREFER IGNORE BUT
ISRAEL CANNOT. IN BRIEF, EBAN ELOQUENTLY BUT MATTER-OF-FACTLY
RECITED USUAL ISRAELI LINE ON ARAB TERRORISM AND GOI ACTIONS
AGAINST IT, WHILE NOTING THAT ISRAEL AND THE US, AS THE PRIMARY
TARGETS, WERE VIRTUALLY ALONE IN OUR ATTEMPTS TO HAVE INTER-
NATIONAL COMMUNITY TAKE EFFECTIVE ACTION AGAINST SPECIFIC ACT
OF TERROR IN THE SKIES WHICH ARABS HAD EVOLVED AS POLITICAL
WEAPON.

5. AS CONCERNS THE ROME ICAO MEETING, EBAN NOTED IT WAS
IRONIC THAT ORIGINAL PURPOSE WAS TO STRENGTHEN CIVIL AIR SECURITY
AND ISRAEL WAS ON RECORD AS STRONGLY SUPPORTING PROPOSALS TO
THIS EFFECT WHILE ARABS WERE ADAMANTLY OPPOSED. AT ANY RATE,
EBAN CONTINUED, ISRAEL UNDERSTOOD THAT INTERNATIONAL
FORUMS WERE STACKED AGAINST HER ("IF THERE WERE 30 JEWISH
STATES AND ONE MUSLIM/ARAB STATE THE RESULTS WOULD BE
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DIFFERENT"). AT ROME, THEREFORE, ISRAEL EXPECTED "CRITICAL
RHETORIC." IT WAS IMPERATIVE, HOWEVER, THAT THE ROME MEETING
NOT VOTE SANCTIONS AGAINST ISRAEL WHICH WOULD HAVE THE PRACTICAL
EFFECT OF HARMING ISRAEL'S CIVIL AVIATION - "OUR ONLY LINK WITH
THE WORLD." (EBAN REPEATED FOREGOING SEVERAL TIMES DURING
CONVERSATION.) EBAN ACKNOWLEDGED MY REFERENCE
TO OUR COOPERATION IN MONTREAL AND ALSO STATED THAT GOI WAS
REASSURED BOTH BY SUCH PAST COOPERATION AND ASST SEC'Y SISCO'S

ASSURANCE THAT AT ROME US WOULD WORK HARD TO PREVENT DAMAGE TO ISRAELI CIVIL AVIATION. HE WAS TAKING OCCASION OF MY "WELCOME" PRESENCE IN JERUSALEM TO EXPRESS TO ME PERSONALLY GREAT CONCERN OF ISRAEL OVER POSSIBLE ADVERSE RESULTS OF ROME UNLESS WE - US AND GOI - WORK HARD TO PREVENT THIS.

6. I NOTED US RECOGNIZES PROBLEMS OF ROME AND WE ARE CERTAINLY PREPARED TO DO OUR BEST UNDER CIRCUMSTANCES. IN THIS RESPECT, I COMMENTED THAT US HAS CONSISTENTLY DISPLAYED ITS STRONG SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL, CITING VETO IN SC AS PERHAPS MOST DRAMATIC RECENT PUBLIC DISPLAY OF US POSITION. HE NOTED THAT GOI WILL AWAREMUCH ACTION WAS NOT EASY FOR US, AND IN THIS RESPECT, AUG 10 AIRCRAFT DIVERSION WAS QUITE TROUBLESOME FOR ISRAEL'S FRIENDS IN US. I CONFIRMED ASSURANCES GIVEN IN WASHINGTON OF CLOSE COOPERATION RE ROME MEETING AND ASKED IF EBAN HAD ANY SUGGESTIONS WHICH WE COULD PASS TO WASHINGTON.

7. EBAN REPLIED THAT, AT PRESENT, HE COULD ONLY SUGGEST THAT US MIGHT WISH CONSIDER APPROACHING UK, CANADA AND NETHERLANDS WHO HAD CO-SPONSORED FOUR POWER DRAFT IN MONTREAL ICAO CONF ON ANTI-HIJACKING AND MIGHT BE WILLING TO WORK WITH US IN ROME. HE NOTED HERE THAT HOPE AT ROME IS THAT ARABS WILL AGREE TO LANGUAGE WEAKER THAN THEY WANT IN INTEREST OF UNANIMITY AND SUCH LANGUAGE WOULD HAVE NO TEETH AS FAR PRACTICAL SANCTIONS ARE CONCERNED. EBAN ASSUMED OUR DELEGATIONS IN ROME WOULD BE IN CLOSE TOUCH RE TACTICS.

8. I PROMISED TO REPORT EBAN'S VIEWS PROMPTLY AND ASKED IF EBAN WISHED RAISE OTHER BUSINESS. EBAN REPLIED IN

NEGATIVE, NOTING ROME CONFERENCE IS ONLY REALLY TIME SENSITIVE PROBLEM CURRENTLY BEFORE US. HE NOTED HE WOULD SEE ME
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ON AUG 28, DAY OF PRESENTATION OF CREDENTIALS.

9. COMMENT: GOI IS OBVIOUSLY VERY CONCERNED OVER POSSIBLE ADVERSE EFFECTS OF ROME. IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT EBAN NEVER ONCE ALLUDED DIRECTLY TO US VOTES IN SC AND MONTREAL CONDEMNING AUG 10 INCIDENT AND, INDEED, APPEARED RECONCILED TO SIMILAR US VOTE IN ROME IF RESOLUTION CAN BE LIMITED TO CONDEMNATORY "REHETORIC." WE SENSED A SIMILAR APPROACH BY ISRAELIS TO MONTREAL RESOLUTION. THIS SOPHISTICATION OF APPROACH, PROBABLY DIRECT RESULT OF EBAN'S RETURN TO JERUSALEM COUPLED WITH INPUT OF CIVIL AIR EXPERTS INTO DECISION MAKING MECHANISM. (AS WE REPORTED EARLIER, THIS GROUP WAS VERY UNHAPPY BY AUG 10 INCIDENT.) SUCH ATTITUDE BY GOI, IF IT STICKS, SHOULD MAKE IT EASIER FOR US TO BE HELPFUL TO ISRAEL IN ROME.

10. PRESS REACTION TO MEETING BEING REPORTED SEPTEL.
KEATING

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